JANUARY – JUNE 2010

THE NEWSLETTER

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
THE NATIONAL LIBRARY
KOLKATA

EDITORIAL

When the Imperial Library was turned into the National Library of India, it was hoped that the institution would function primarily as the depository of the nation's printed heritage. We have not lost sight of that vision, and the library still remains the premier resource centre of knowledge and information in the country.

However, technologies of the word have evolved with bewildering rapidity in the recent past, and so have the demands of information management. The last quarter saw the introduction of electronic journals in our reading rooms. On-line databases and e-books would be easier to access once the current project of upgrading the ICT infrastructure is complete. The library needs an electronic catalogue—the one now searchable is only partial. This aim would be achieved once the retro-conversion of catalogues currently under way is complete. We have an ambitious plan of digitizing selected rare and brittle documents: only 3.2 million pages have been digitized so far. We also hope to build a database of microforms. It would be possible to produce microfilms and digital copies simultaneously with a hybrid microfilm camera, if our efforts to procure one succeed. There is a plan to turn the Esplanade Reading Room into a city centre that would house microforms and digital copies of newspapers and serials.

The Gift and Exchange Policy has been revised in June, and an Exhibition Policy has been drafted. A committee of eminent academics has been formed in June to advise the library on possible publication of manuscripts and rare books in its collection. Substantial progress was made in clearing the backlog of unprocessed books in the last financial year. We hope the scheme that allowed us to hire outsourced staff would be approved this year as well.

It is important for knowledge managers to listen to peers and subordinates, accept feedback from renowned and ordinary users, and upgrade their skills through training and reorientation. A Training and Human Resource Development division has been added to the library in the last quarter. The division has already organized a session on the Right to Information Act. Starting with the next financial year, we hope to have a staff development action plan in place. The library is short of staff, but we have been able to manage, with the emphasis being on multi-tasking, work-rationalization, periodic reviews, transparency and accountability. The administrative wing of the library is as much part of this process as the professional one.

Services at the library are user-driven, and the expectations of users increase in proportion to the library's responsiveness and efficiency. We have been processing routine queries from readers and providing the usual bibliographic and reprographic services. But we felt that the scheme of allotting special seats with an enhanced borrowing limit to scholars needs to be re-introduced and the suggestion box put back in the Main Reading Room. Fire exit signs have been put up and warnings have been posted on the stairs and near the entrance, especially for those using wheelchairs. We hope to have name-tags on the trees, an improved canteen, closed-circuit television and special toilets for the differently abled by the end of the next quarter. The website will also be updated.

The *Newsletter* too has been revived to report some of these projects and events. The National Library needs to *believe* in itself which, as Anatole France would have said, is as crucial to achieving great things as dreaming them.

Swapan Chakravorty
30 June 2010

(This number of the *Newsletter* covers the period January 2010 to June 2010, although the emphasis would be on the more recent developments.)

Major Projects
Retroconversion of Bibliographical Records into MARC 21 Format (Retrocon)
The Retrocon project restarted on 1 January 2010 when 4 of the 5 agencies, which satisfactorily worked in the past, were asked to reorganize their teams and start producing 20,000 records per head per month. By the end of March all the four agencies could collectively capture 1,27,838 records.

The Validation Cell was reorganized by transferring staff members from various divisions. In all, 10 experienced staff members were picked to form the Validations Cell under the charge of ALIO, Germanic Languages Division. The Cell actually started functioning from the end of February 2010.

The status by the 4th week of June 2010 is that 2,59,038 bibliographical records have been captured by the agencies; 1,16,149 records have been uploaded in the server; 74,331 records have been validated, out of which bills have been raised so far of 60,111 units along with 2,983 copies / vols.

The library has asked for approval and expenditure sanction of the entire project. The estimate of Rs 11,26,71,758 has been submitted. The final approval is awaited.

The library has recently received revalidation of Rs 54,01,508 for completing 2 lakh MARC 21 records. 1,89,265 records have already been uploaded in the server.

The library has calculated that the vendors will upload 9,60,000 records per year @ 80,000 per month and the library will validate over 60% of them, i.e. nearly 5 to 6 lakhs records with the present set up of Validation Cell.

The library has completed the processed collection of general monographs in English, except the Imperial Library collection as the books are unaccessioned. The project has entered the special collections, like the Indian official documents, foreign official documents and completed data capturing of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee Collection, comprising 86,000 volumes.

If the project is sanctioned for the entirety of the library's holdings, it should be completed in two-and-a-half years' time.

Enhancement and Upgradation of ICT System at the National Library
Barring a few, procurement of most of the major items has been made by NICSI and supplied to the library. Installation of the two main servers is complete. Storage will be installed next, for which an HBA card is required. The purchase order for the item has been issued by NICSI. To make the

server fully operational, the latest version of Virtua (application software) is required for which an order has been placed with VTLS, the proprietor. BSNL has undertaken the work of the leased line which is expected to be in place within a month's time. Installation of LAN, both passive and active is complete. Wireless LAN will be activated once the wireless interface devices are supplied by NICSI. Another 150,000 bibliographic records will be ported to the website within the next few days. Revalidation of Rs 22.5 lakh has been obtained from the Ministry of Culture in early June. After due consultation with NIC, further action will be taken for deployment of support manpower.

Rapid Conversion of Card Catalogues

The Rapid Conversion of Card Catalogues is a project that aims at rapidly scanning all the catalogue cards in the Reading Room cabinets and preparing machine-readable databases for these records. The administrative approval and expenditure sanction from the Ministry of Culture have been obtained for the project that will see 4,00,000 records converted in the first instance as machine searchable cards posted on the website. Work started in the last week of June with the signing of the agreement between the National Library and the vendor, Datasoft.

However, the Retrocon project will proceed simultaneously. After its completion the complete bibliographical details of the library's holdings will be machine-readable.

Digitization of Rare, Old and Brittle Books

3.2 million pages were digitized during the first phase of the project. The library issued a tender for digitization in 2009-10 which had to be cancelled as no bidder was found suitable for the job. The library then explored the possibility to get the work done through C-DAC. The Advisory Board advised other options. The Director contacted Khuda Bux Library and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. A response has been received from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Currently the library is working towards re-tendering.

Backlog of Unaccessioned and Unprocessed Books

The Library proposed to clear huge backlog of unaccessioned and unprocessed stock of books accumulated over the years. Over 3 lakhs such publications needed accessioning and processing and the language divisions were unable to clear the work because of an acute shortage of staff. A proposal to accessioning and processing of backlog publications with outsourced staff was submitted, which was approved by the Ministry in May 2009 and a sum of Rs 22,05,000 was sanctioned for the project.

In reply to a press release, the Secretary, Ministry of Culture, suggested that students from various universities, colleges and other institutions may be drawn and engaged to accession books in the library. The library also engaged students from the departments of Library and Information Science of various universities. The students were trained by the senior professional staff of the library to process books in MARC21 following Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2nd edition (AACR2) and assigning subject headings from schedules of Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and upload the records through Virtua software in the library's server. Around 96,000 titles were processed during this phase.

The library spent Rs 11,62,631only and have asked for revalidation of the remnant amount of Rs 10,42,369. As several objections are now raised why the work was not done by following General Financial Rules, 2005, of the Government of India under the chapter 'Procurement of Services' read with 'Outsourcing of Services', it has been decided to assign the job of processing to the 4 selected vendors working in the Retrocon project, as processing books is a clause in the agreement signed between the library authority and the vendors.

It needs to be mentioned that during data capturing in Retrocon project, the vendors are detecting several unaccessioned books and the effort is going waste when the accession number is not found. Therefore, they have now been directed to accession them, supply a list of such accessioned books to the concerned officer of the division, and submit a bill which the library shall arrange to pay from the revalidated amount of the project.

The revalidation of Rs 10,42,369 for the project has been granted in late June.

Stock Verification

The Performance Audit in its report mentioned that the stock verification of the collections in the National Library has not been done properly for several years. In response to an article published in *The Times of India* dated 5.8.2008, the Secretary, Ministry of Culture, observed that a system be instituted using students in updating accession registers and stock taking under the supervision of the National Library officials.

The library carried out some pilot projects using students to verify physically the stock in five Indian languages. A total of 1,53,894 books have been physically verified.

The National Library has over 2.5 million reading materials and for long the stock was not physically verified. Now that 1,53,894 books have been verified at a cost of Rs 6,45,954, a proposal has been put forward to the Ministry of Culture for consideration. Work of stock verification will be resumed once the proposal is approved.

Indexing of Pictures on Kolkata

A project has been undertaken by the National Library to scan, compile and index pictures of Kolkata from the documents available in the collection of the library. The work is in progress.

Training and Staff Development
A New Division

A new division called Training and HRD Division was added to the library in the first week of May. The creation of the division had been one of the recommendations of the last Performance Audit. The Division will be run by a committee chaired by the Principal Library and Information Officer (I). The committee had its first meeting on 21 May 2010 at which a draft policy was adopted.

The policy stipulates that the Division will plan, sponsor and monitor training programmes, circulate information among the members of the staff regarding training opportunities, collect all data relating to training courses organized by the library or to which members of the staff have been nominated, collaborate with other institutions and / or with other divisions of the library for staff training, and identify staff development needs. The Division will review its policy periodically, assess the quality of training and staff development services, and report on relevant matters to the Advisory Board and, when necessary, the Ministry of Culture. Starting from the year 2011-12, the Division will draw up a staff development action plan, based on inputs from trainees and resource persons.

Session on Right to Information Act

As part of the new initiative, a training session on the Right to Information Act was held at the auditorium on 14 May 2010. Tapan Sarkar, Library and Information Officer, and Narahari Sardar, Superinitendent, Accounts, informed the members of the staff of the various provisions of the Act and their possible misuse.

Training Programmes and Outreach Activities

The National Library organized a training programme on Library Management for the Library Personnel of the North Eastern States of India between 17 and 30 March 2010. 36 library professionals from Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura participated in the programme. The course was inaugurated with welcome address by the Sri K. K. Banerjee, Director, the National Library. Asesh Kumar Ghatak, LIO, Tapan Sarkar, LIO, Ashok Kumar Nath, LIO, Syed Abuzar, ALIO, S. Shivaprasad, ALIO, Joygopal Saha, LIA, Ashim Mukhopadhyay, LIA, Sanjoy Kumar Maity, LIA, Gopa Gosh, LIA and Ganesh Chandra Das, LIA were the resource persons. Lectures were supplemented by practical demonstrations and power point presentations on acquisition policy, classification, cataloguing, serial control, management of government documents, reading room management, preservation of library materials, bibliography services, library automation, microfilming and digitization.

The library conducted a Workshop-cum-Training Programme on Preservation of Rare and Old Library Documents from 24 March to 28 March 2010. The event was organized by the Media

5

Archives-cum-National Reference Library on the North-East, Media Trust, Assam. 25 library professionals from the north eastern states of India participated as trainees. 10 preservation experts from the Laboratory, Preservation and Reprography Divisions under the leadership of Ashok Kumar Nath, Library and Information Officer, were deputed to impart training to the participants. Amar Singh Bageshwar, LIA, Ganesh Das, LIA, Tarapada Dutta, LIA, Sanjay Maity, LIA, Gita Roy, LIA, Pulin Behari Sarkar, LC, Dhiren Roy, LC, Satya Ranjan Sardar, LC and Pinki Bansfore, LA acted as resource persons. The procedures were explained through lectures and practical demonstration.

A paper titled 'Digital Preservation and Cyber Crime on Intellectual Property' by Ashok Kumar Nath was published in the special issue of *The New Spectrum* of the Media Trust, Assam, on this occasion.

Programmes under the Scheme of Infrastructure Development of Libraries in the North-Eastern Region during 2009-2010

The Ministry of Culture accorded the administrative approval and the expenditure sanction (no. F.12-8/2009-Lib. dated 02.03.2010) for the following programmes organised under the aegis of the National Library.

Serial No.	Topic	Amount
1	Preservation of Library Materials in collaboration with Media Trust, Guwahati	Rs 4,34,000
2	Application of Computer in collaboration with Srimant Sankardeva Kalakshestra, Guwahati.	Rs 3,99,200
3	Application of Computer in-collaboration with University Library, Manipur University, Manipur.	Rs 3,86,000
4	Training Programmes in the National Library.	Rs 9,94,000
	Total	Rs 22,13,200

Members of the Staff Nominated for Other Training Programmes.
Jagmal Singh, LIO, attended a training session on 'Team Building and Management' organized by the Institiute of Secretariat Management at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (Old Campus) from 23 June to 25 June 2010.

B. Nageshwara Rao, Sanjib Karmakar, and Sukanta Pathak were nominated to the three-day national workshop on 'Free and Open Source Software in Library Management using Koha Mark 21' held on 17 May to 20 May 2010 at the Centre for Information Studies and Social Research, Jadavpur University campus, Kolkata.

Training Programmes in Hindi
The Hindi Cell shall be conducting a workshop on noting and drafting on 7-8 July 2010.

Gift and Exchange Policy
A Gift and Exchange Policy was drafted in the middle of June and will be placed for discussion in the next meeting of the Advisory Board. The policy is based on founding principles of the library, while defining terms of acceptance, procedures and evaluation.

Service
Main Reading Room
The scheme of allotting special seats in the Main Reading Room, with an enhanced borrowing limit, was reintroduced in mid-May for accredited scholars, and the response has been encouraging

The Suggestion Box in the Main Reading Room has also been put back. Services continue uninterrupted during the lunch hour in the Main Reading Room.

Children's Library
The newly organized Children's Library was opened on 31 March 2010 in Bhasa Bhavan by the then Director Sri K. K. Banerjee. More than 1,000 new books have been added to the library. An LCD television and computers have been installed. There are plans for further additions to make the Reading Room to more attractive to young users.

Conservation, Reprography and Laboratory Services

National Library is the biggest producer and consumer in the country of the expertise in conservation and preservation of books and other library materials. The library has a well-equipped unit for microfilming rare and old documents for long-term preservation. If proper storage facilities can be provided, a microfilm roll can be used for more than five hundred years. The Reprography Division and Laboratory have very recently acquired an Ultrasonic Microfilm Splicer, a Densitometer, Paper Testing Equipment and other equipment. We hope to acquire a Hybrid Microfilm Camera that would enable microfilming and digitizing at the same time. We have also applied for the Ministry for the modernization of the fumigation chamber.

The assistance of the library for conservation work has been sought in the last quarter by such organizations as the Victoria Memorial, the National Council of Education Bengal, and Fort William.

Canteen

A new Canteen Committee was formed in the penultimate week of June after a discussion with the relevant members of the staff on ways of revamping the canteen. We hope to have a cafeteria at Bhasa Bhavan, although cooking is unlikely to be permitted inside the building. A Cafetaria Committee, formed on 5 May 2010, is looking into the options.

Other Services

Special toilets for the differently abled have been planned, and the CPWD has been asked to submit estimates. The first of such toilets shall be installed in Bhasa Bhavan.

Signs have been posted in the front entrance of Bhasa Bhavan directing wheelchair users and others to the ramp and ground floor access at the rear. Signs have also been planted on the stairs asking users to be careful when the steps are wet.

Security

Fire exit signs have been put up at all points at the Bhasa Bhavan in June. The building plans of the library have been submitted with the Fire Department and the Alipore Police Station the same month.

The Officer-in Charge of Alipore Police Station met the Director on 13 May 2010 and suggested security measures. The Security Officer met officials of the fire service in mid-June and requested that mock fire drills be organized at the library.

Administrative approval and expenditure sanction was granted by the Ministry of Culture for 7 additional door-frame metal detectors for the library in early June 2010.

The sanction for closed-circuit television at the library was cleared in early 2010. However, the CPWD has failed to deliver on its promises. The library management is doing its best to break through the impasse.

Website

The website of the National Library has been in the <gov.in> domain since 2009 and is being hosted by the NIC. The new dynamic site was launched on 1 April 2010. Bibliographical details of the catalogue is now partially searchable on the web. However, the information in the old website needs to be updated. It is now being edited offline, and we hope to post the revised data before too long.

Events

Change of Director

Sri K. K. Banerjee demitted office as Director of the library on 17 April 2010. A short farewell for Sri Banerjee was organized at the charge hand-over at the Director's new office at Bhasa Bhavan. Sri Banerjee had steered the library through difficult times and had initiated important projects in his 17 months in office in spite of his divided responsibilities as Directors of Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation and the National Library.

Professor Swapan Chakravorty took charge as full-time Director on 17 April 2010. Professor Chakravorty is on lien from Jadavpur University, where he is Professor of English, and former Joint Director of the School of Cultural Texts and Records. He was educated in Kolkata and Oxford, and specializes in early modern European drama, book history, textual studies and literary theory. He also writes in Bengali, especially on nineteenth-century Bengal. He has recently been awarded the Narsingh Das award for 2009 by Delhi University for the book *Mudraner sanskriti o bangla boi* (Kolkata:Ababhas, 2007).

World Book Day

The Central Reference Library celebrated **World Book Day** on 23 April 2010. The Director, National Library, spoke on the occasion. The other speakers included the renowned Bengali novelists Abul Bashar and Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay.

Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore

The pre-150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore was celebrated on 9 May 2010. The statue of the poet near the main entrance of Bhasa Bhavan and the portrait in the lobby were garlanded. P.T. Nair, renowned historian of Kolkata and of the library, Ardhendu Mukhopadhyay, a senior reader, and the Director spoke on the occasion. The entire event was proposed, planned and managed by members of the library staff.

Anti-Terror Day

Members of the library staff joined public servants across the country to take the pledge to fight terrorism in all its forms on Anti-Terror Day on 21 May 2010. The staff assembled at the auditorium at 11.50 am, and the reading of the pledge was led by the Director.

Visitors

A delegation comprising Andreas Mälck, Director, Department of Preservation, Conservation and Digitization at the Staatsbibliothek Zu Berlin, Dr Reimar Volker, Director, Goethe-Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Kolkata, Marilen Daum, Director, Library and Information Services, South Asia,

Goethe-Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Delhi, and Renu Seth, Chief Librarian, Goethe-Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Delhi, visited the National Library on 30 April 2010. The team visited the Laboratory, Binding Section, Reprography Division, Conservation and Microfilming Division, Rare Book Division and other related Divisions, and was informed of current projects in these fields. Herr Mälck spoke to library officials regarding the advisability of purchasing some machines that would require the Library to abandon a few of the useful manual processes and skills now practised. The Director observed that exchanges of books and personnel seem to have languished since the unification of Germany and ought to be strengthened.

Sri Prafulla Mahanta, former Chief Minister of Assam, and his wife, the author and translator Dr Jayasree Goswami Mahanta, visited the library on 12 May 2010. Dr Mahanta deposited a copy of her most recent book *Mahakabi*.

Conferences
Dr R Ramachandran, PLIO (I) attended the International Conference on 'Libraries—Power of a Knowledge Society' at the National Library of Korea, Seoul, from 14 June to 16 June 2010. He presented a paper titled 'Application of Computers in the National Library of India'. He also attended the conference held in Chennai on the CIP project on 28 April. The conference was the southern regional meet on the project organized by the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation.

Professor Swapan Chakravorty was Chief Guest and speaker at the workshop on 'Women's Studies and Knowledge Systems' organized by the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, on 18 May 2010.

Special Publications
In accordance with the recommendation of the Advisory Board, a Committee for Special Publications was formed in the penultimate week of June to consider the possibility of reprinting and re-publishing rare titles in the library's holdings. The Committee is to meet for the first time on 2 July 2010.

Exhibitions

The Committee for the Celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore is planning an exhibition of the poet's works and translations in the library's holdings.

An exhibition of Chinese art that would tour the country under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture is scheduled to be held in the library from March to May 2011.

A draft Exhibition Policy for the library was prepared in the third week of May. The draft is likely to be placed for discussion in the next meeting of the Advisory Board.

Professional Committee

The Professional Committee of the library met after a long interval on 26 April 2010 and again on 20 May 2010. On 26 April, plans for celebrating the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore were discussed. A committee was formed to draw up proposals for celebrating the poet's 150th birth anniversary. On 20 May, Dr Ramachandran, PLIO (I), discussed the possible involvement of the library in the ISBN and Cataloguing in Publication project. A small committee was appointed to look into the issues. He also initiated a discussion on the introduction of RFID technology in the library.

Establishment

The existing staff strength as on 30 June 2010 was 655, and the existing strength stood at 412. In addition there are 55 members of the outsourced staff. The number of vacancies stood at 188. 6 regular posts fell vacant in the month of May. 3 posts of Assistants and 20 of Library Clerks were filled by promotion during the quarter April-June 2010. A Departmental Promotion Committee meeting was held at the library on 8 May 2010.

A meeting was held on 14-15 June 2010 to review staff position and rationalize work-load. Heads of all sections and divisions were present.

Accounts

The Annual Action Plan for the financial year was finalized at a meeting on 26 April 2010. A meeting was held on 28 May 2010 to review the current status. The expenditure statement up to 30 June is as follows:

PLAN (Amount in Rs.)	
Expenditure up to 30.06.2010	Rs 1,71,08955

NON-PLAN (Amount in Rs.)	
Expenditure up to 30.06.2010	Rs 5,14,76,227

Estate

Belvedere House and Bhasa Bhavan

All the Departments / Divisions / Sections functioning from the Main Building (Belvedere House) have been shifted to the Bhasha Bhavan during early 2010. This huge task was completed without causing serious inconvenience to the readers. Some Departments / Divisions / Sections have also been shifted from the Annexe Building to their designated spaces at Bhasa Bhavan. The interior décor of the Main Reading Room is incomplete, and a few offices are still under construction. The CPWD has submitted plans for a permanent exhibition gallery, which is being examined by the newly formed Exhibitions Committee.

The Main Building (Belvedere House) is currently under the care of the Archaeological Survey of India. The ASI will restore and repair the heritage building. Work has started on the preliminary documentation. The ASI is to hand over the structure to the National Library within a span of three years. A Heritage Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Professor Barun De, Chairperson, West Bengal Heritage Commission. The committee will recommend and draw up plans for future re-use of the site. The Committee met on 3 April and again on 30 April 2010.

New Stack Building

The Director has written to the Ministry of Culture seeking permission to dispose of the destroyed material dumped in the New Stack Building next to the old Director's residence, so that the remaining material may be retrieved. This was also the recommendation of the Advisory Board made its meeting on 3 April 2010.

Guards' Rooms

The construction of guards' rooms near Bhasa Bhavan is now complete.

Grounds

The Gardens division has completed the census of more than 700 mature trees in the library campus. Name tags for the trees are being translated and ordered. These should be up soon.

Superannuation

Himangshu Sekhar Giri, LC, superannuated in May 2010. Among others who have retired between January and June are Prashanta K. Pramanik, Guard, Ranjit K. Dey, LC, Anup K. Chakraborty, ALIO, Dipti Bhattacharjee, Senior Assistant, Joydeb Dutta, LC, and Ram Chandra Ram, Chowkidar.

Deaths

We sadly record the loss of two of our colleagues. Awodh Kishor Prasad, LC, died on 10 May 2010. Kartik Das, JLA, died on 17 May 2010.

Contact Details

Telephone No. (EPABX)	:	**033 2479 1381-84**
Director's Office	:	**033 2479 2968**
Fax No.	:	**033 2479 1462**
E-mail Address	:	**nldirector@rediffmail.com**
Website Address	:	**www.nlindia.org**
Address for Correspondence	:	**The National Library**
		Belvedere, Alipore
		Kolkata - 700 027
		INDIA

The Main Building of the National Library, Belvedere House - a heritage building.